

This Page Is Inserted by IFW Operations  
and is not a part of the Official Record

## **BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES**

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images may include (but are not limited to):

- BLACK BORDERS
- TEXT CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES
- FADED TEXT
- ILLEGIBLE TEXT
- SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES
- COLORED PHOTOS
- BLACK OR VERY BLACK AND WHITE DARK PHOTOS
- GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS

**IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.**

**As rescanning documents *will not* correct images,  
please do not report the images to the  
Image Problem Mailbox.**

***This Page Blank (uspto)***

AN - 2000-674762 [66]

● PAJ / JPO

PN - JP2000194767 A 20000714

PD - 2000-07-14

AP - JP19980376569 19981224

IN - YUKI TSUTOMU

PA - RICOH CO LTD

TI - AUTOMATIC ORDERING SYSTEM

AB - PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To automatically order consumption articles, of which the supply is requested, from the information of consumption articles of OA equipment connected to a network and the stock information of respective consumption articles.  
- SOLUTION: This stock of consumption articles of OA equipment is managed and the consumption articles to be lacked automatically order to the ordering destination 5 by automatic ordering terminal equipment 1 connected with printers 3a and 3b and copy machines 4a and 4b through networks 2a and 2b. The automatic ordering terminal equipment 1 is provided with a stock information managing means, OA equipment managing means for acquiring the information on consumption articles of OA equipment through the networks, supply amount calculating means for calculating the supply amount of consumption articles from the information, lack detecting means and ordering means, the consumption articles to be lacked are detected based on the stock amount and supply amount by fine lack detecting means and the consumption articles are ordered through a facsimile or mail to the ordering destination 5 by the ordering means.

I - G06F17/60 ;B41J29/38 ;G03G21/00 ;H04N1/00

**This Page Blank (uspto)**

(19) 日本国特許庁 (J P)

(12) 公開特許公報 (A)

(11) 特許出願公開番号

特開2000-194767

(P2000-194767A)

(43) 公開日 平成12年7月14日 (2000. 7. 14)

(51) Int.Cl. <sup>7</sup>	識別記号	F I	テマコード* (参考)
G 0 6 F 17/60		G 0 6 F 15/21	3 3 0
B 4 1 J 29/38		B 4 1 J 29/38	Z
G 0 3 G 21/00	3 9 6	G 0 3 G 21/00	3 9 6
H 0 4 N 1/00		H 0 4 N 1/00	Z

審査請求 未請求 請求項の数 3 F D (全 6 頁)

(21) 出願番号 特願平10-376569

(22) 出願日 平成10年12月24日 (1998. 12. 24)

(71) 出願人 000006747

株式会社リコー

東京都大田区中馬込1丁目3番6号

(72) 発明者 結城 力

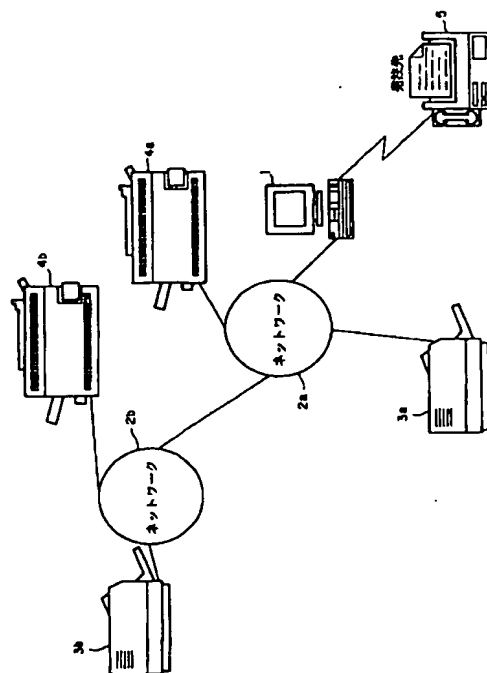
東京都大田区中馬込1丁目3番6号 株式会社リコー内

(54) 【発明の名称】 自動発注システム

(57) 【要約】

【課題】 ネットワークに接続されているOA機器の消耗品の情報及び各消耗品の在庫情報から供給が要求される消耗品を自動的に発注する。

【解決手段】 プリンタ3a、3b、複写機4a、4bとネットワーク2a、2bによって接続されている自動発注端末装置1により、OA機器の消耗品の在庫を管理し、不足しそうな消耗品を発注先5に自動的に発注する。自動発注端末装置1は、在庫情報管理手段と、ネットワークを介してOA機器の消耗品の情報を取得するためのOA機器管理手段と、情報より消耗品の供給量を計算する供給量計算手段と、欠品検出手段及び発注手段とを備え、欠品検出手段によって在庫量と供給量に基づいて不足になりそうな消耗品を検出し、発注手段によって発注元5にファクシミリやメール等で消耗品の発注を行う。



## 【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 ネットワークに接続されているオフィス・オートメーション機器及び自動発注端末装置からなる自動発注システムにおいて、前記自動発注端末装置は、前記オフィス・オートメーション機器の消耗品の在庫を管理する在庫情報管理手段と、前記ネットワークを介して前記オフィス・オートメーション機器の前記消耗品の情報を取得するためのオフィス・オートメーション機器管理手段と、前記情報より前記消耗品の供給量を計算する供給量計算手段と、前記在庫の量と前記供給量に基づいて不足になりそうな前記消耗品を検出するための欠品検出手段と、前記消耗品の発注を行う発注手段とを備えていることを特徴とする自動発注システム。

【請求項2】 請求項1に記載の自動発注システムにおいて、前記オフィス・オートメーション機器管理手段は、前記オフィス・オートメーション機器の消耗品供給装置に異常があった場合は、前記ネットワークを介して前記オフィス・オートメーション機器がもつ処理履歴等の総計情報を取得することを特徴とする自動発注システム。

【請求項3】 ネットワークに接続されているオフィス・オートメーション機器及び自動発注端末装置からなる自動発注システムにおいて、前記自動発注端末装置は、前記オフィス・オートメーション機器の消耗品の在庫を管理する在庫情報管理手段と、前記ネットワークを介して前記オフィス・オートメーション機器の前記消耗品の情報及び処理履歴等の総計情報を取得し記憶装置に記憶して管理するためのオフィス・オートメーション機器管理手段と、前記記憶装置に記憶された前記消耗品の情報及び総計情報より前記消耗品の供給量を予測的に計算する供給量計算手段と、前記在庫の量と前記供給量に基づいて不足になりそうな前記消耗品を検出するための欠品検出手段と、前記消耗品の発注を行う発注手段とを備えていることを特徴とする自動発注システム。

## 【発明の詳細な説明】

## 【0001】

【発明の属する技術分野】本発明は、自動発注システム、より詳細には、ネットワークに接続したオフィス・オートメーション機器（以下、OA機器）がもつ各消耗品の情報及び履歴等の総計情報を取得し、欠品が出そうな消耗品をファクシミリ等で自動的に発注する自動発注システムに関する。

## 【0002】

【従来の技術】プリンタ装置及び複写機などのOA機器では、記録紙やトナー等の消耗品がなくなる前に供給要求が必要と判断された場合は、パネル等にて消耗品の供給を要求する。ユーザーは、在庫から必要な消耗品を取り出し、OA機器にその消耗品の供給を行う。もし、記録紙やトナー等の消耗品がなくなった場合は、電話等で納入業者に消耗品の発注を行う。また、特開平8-31

5052号公報には、消耗品がなくなったときに自動的に発注を行うシステムが記載されている。

## 【0003】

【発明が解決しようとする課題】しかしながら、消耗品の発注中は、OA機器が消耗品の供給が要求されても、消耗品の供給ができずに、印刷あるいはコピー作業ができなくなる。更に、各プリンタ装置及び複写機には、各消耗品の情報を取得できるが、記録紙やトナー等の供給装置の故障のため正確に各消耗品の情報を取得できない場合や、ハードのトラブルにより各消耗品の残量及び印刷結果、履歴等の総計情報が取れない場合がある。

【0004】本発明は上述のごとき実情に鑑みてなされたものであり、ネットワークに接続されているOA機器の消耗品の情報及び各消耗品の在庫情報から供給が要求される消耗品を自動的に発注する自動発注システムを提供すること、更にOA機器の供給装置の故障により正確に各消耗品の情報を取得できない場合やOA機器のハードのトラブルにより各消耗品の残量及び印刷結果の総計情報が取れない場合においても供給が要求される消耗品を自動的に発注する自動発注システムを提供することを目的とする。

## 【0005】

【課題を解決するための手段】請求項1の発明は、ネットワークに接続されているオフィス・オートメーション機器及び自動発注端末装置からなる自動発注システムにおいて、前記自動発注端末装置は、前記オフィス・オートメーション機器の消耗品の在庫を管理する在庫情報管理手段と、前記ネットワークを介して前記オフィス・オートメーション機器の前記消耗品の情報を取得するためのオフィス・オートメーション機器管理手段と、前記情報より前記消耗品の供給量を計算する供給量計算手段と、前記在庫の量と前記供給量に基づいて不足になりそうな前記消耗品を検出するための欠品検出手段と、前記消耗品の発注を行う発注手段とを備えていることを特徴としたものである。

【0006】すなわち、各消耗品の在庫情報（例えば、記録紙の枚数、トナーの個数など）を覚えておき、OA機器からの各消耗品の情報を参考にして消耗品の供給量を計算し、不足しそうな消耗品があれば、自動的にファクシミリやメール等で納入業者に発注を行う。

【0007】請求項2の発明は、請求項1の発明において、前記オフィス・オートメーション機器管理手段は、前記オフィス・オートメーション機器の消耗品供給装置に異常があった場合は、前記ネットワークを介して前記オフィス・オートメーション機器がもつ処理履歴等の総計情報を取得することを特徴としたものである。

【0008】すなわち、正確に各消耗品の情報を取得できない場合においては、印刷結果（履歴）の総計情報に記録されている出力枚数のカウンターより、各消耗品の必要な供給量を計算する。そこで、現在の各消耗品の在

庫情報（例えば、記録紙の枚数、トナーの個数など）とOA機器が持つ各消耗品の情報及び印刷結果の総計情報を取得し、その情報から各消耗品の供給量を計算し、不足しそうな消耗品があれば、自動的にファクシミリやメール等で納入業者に発注を行う。

【0009】請求項3の発明は、ネットワークに接続されているオフィス・オートメーション機器及び自動発注端末装置からなる自動発注システムにおいて、前記自動発注端末装置は、前記オフィス・オートメーション機器の消耗品の在庫を管理する在庫情報管理手段と、前記ネットワークを介して前記オフィス・オートメーション機器の前記消耗品の情報及び処理履歴等の総計情報を取得し記憶装置に記憶して管理するためのオフィス・オートメーション機器管理手段と、前記記憶装置に記憶された前記消耗品の情報及び総計情報より前記消耗品の供給量を予測的に計算する供給量計算手段と、前記在庫の量と前記供給量に基づいて不足になりそうな前記消耗品を検出するための欠品検出手段と、前記消耗品の発注を行う発注手段とを備えていることを特徴としたものである。

【0010】すなわち、各消耗品の残量及び印刷結果の総計情報が取れない場合においては、過去の各消耗品の情報及び印刷結果（履歴）の総計情報を記憶しておき、過去の実績（例えば、最近1週間の平均出力枚数、各消耗品の平均残量など）を参考に、各消耗品の供給量を計算する。その供給量と在庫量から、不足しそうな消耗品があれば自動的にファクシミリやメール等で納入業者に発注を行う。

【0011】

【発明の実施の形態】図1は、本発明における自動発注システムの構成例を示す図であり、図中、自動発注端末装置1は、ネットワーク2aを介してプリンタ3a、複写機4aと接続され、ネットワーク2aは、ネットワーク2bを介してプリンタ3b、複写機4bと接続される。また、自動発注端末装置1は、ファクシミリやメールを介して発注先5と接続される。

【0012】図2は、本発明における自動発注システムを説明するためのブロック図であり、図2中、在庫情報管理手段10は、各消耗品の在庫情報の入出力などの処理を行い、OA機器管理手段11は、ネットワークに接続されているプリンタ及び複写機などのOA機器の消耗品などの情報の取得や管理などの処理を行い、供給量計算手段12は、各OA機器に必要な消耗品の供給量の計算を行い、欠品検出手段13は、各消耗品の在庫量及び

供給量を参考に、不足しそうな消耗品の検出を行う。また、発注手段14は、発注先5に欠品検出手段13において検出した消耗品の発注を行う。

【0013】図3は、本発明の自動発注システムにおける第1の実施例を説明するためのフロー図、図4及び図5は、それぞれOA機器の消耗品の在庫情報の構成及びそのデータの例を示す図、図6及び図7は、それぞれOA機器の消耗品情報の構成及びそのデータの例を示す図であり、あらかじめ設定した自動発注時間に到達したとき（ステップS1）、自動発注端末装置1は以下の順で自動発注処理を行う。

【0014】まず、在庫情報管理手段10によって、在庫情報をロードする（ステップS2）。この在庫情報には、図4に示したサプライコード、サプライ名、在庫量、発注中の量を含み、例えば、図5に示すようにあらかじめ在庫にある各消耗品を自動発注端末装置1の入力装置を使って入力しておく。

【0015】次に、OA機器管理手段11によって、ネットワーク上に接続されている各OA機器の消耗品情報を、自動発注端末装置1のネットワークの入出力装置を使って取得する（ステップS3）。各OA機器の消耗品情報には、図6に示したサプライ名、最大供給量、残量を含み、例えば図7のような消耗品情報が取得できる。

【0016】次に、供給量計算手段12によって各消耗品の供給量を計算する（ステップS4）。実際には、各OA機器の消耗品情報を参考にし、記録紙のような消耗品の場合には、次式により必要な供給量を求める。トナーや感光体のような消耗品は、供給量を常に1個とする。

各消耗品の必要な供給量 = 最大供給量 - 残量  
例えば、図7におけるプリンタの消耗品情報から必要な供給量は、次のようになる。

記録紙A4 : 1500枚  
記録紙A3 : 200枚  
プリンタ用トナー : 1個（あと50%）  
プリンタ用感光体 : 1個（15000枚印刷可能）  
上述のごとくして求めた各OA機器の供給量から各消耗品ごとに全体の供給量（トータル）を計算する。

【0017】次に、欠品検出手段13によって、各消耗品の在庫量と供給量（トータル）を比較し（ステップS5）、供給量の方が多いときは、発注処理を行う。例えば、図5に示した在庫情報の場合、次のような在庫量となる。

記録紙A4の在庫量 : 25000枚（在庫量+発注中の量）

記録紙A3の在庫量 : 20000枚（在庫量+発注中の量）

供給量（トータル）が次のような場合、発注対象は、記

記録紙A4の供給量 : 30000枚（5000枚不足）

記録紙A3の供給量 : 10000枚（10000枚余裕）

【0018】最後に、発注手段14によって、発注対象となった消耗品と不足分の発注リストを作成し、ファク

シミリやメール等で発注先に送信する（ステップS6）。例えば、記録紙A4で5000枚不足の場合、以

下のような発注リストになる。

サブライコード : 0001  
 サブライ名 : 記録紙A4  
 発注量 : 5000枚

【0019】図8は、本発明の自動発注システムにおける第2の実施例を説明するためのフロー図、図9及び図10は、それぞれ印刷結果を表す総計情報の構成及びそのデータの例を示す図であり、実施例2においては、実施例1におけるステップS3からステップS4の手順を以下のように変更する。

【0020】OA機器管理手段11によって、ネットワーク上に接続されている各OA機器の消耗品情報を、自動発注端末装置1のネットワークの入出力装置を使って取得する(ステップS13)。ここで、消耗品情報の取得状況を判断し(ステップS14)、供給装置の故障により各OA機器の消耗品情報の取得ができない場合に

プリンタ : 記録紙A4が50枚、記録紙A3が5枚

複写機 : 記録紙A4が3500枚、記録紙が200枚

この出力枚数(トータル)に必要な供給量とする。また、トナーや感光体のような消耗品は、供給量を常に1個とする。

【0022】図11は、本発明の自動発注システムにおける第3の実施例を説明するためのフロー図であり、実施例3においては、実施例2におけるステップS13からステップS16の手順を以下のように変更する。

【0023】OA機器管理手段11によって、ネットワーク上に接続されている各OA機器の消耗品情報及び総計情報を、自動発注端末装置1のネットワークの入出力装置を使って取得する(ステップS23)。実際には、これらの情報を自動発注端末装置1の記憶装置(HDD)に記録しておく。ステップS24において、消耗品情報及び総計情報が取得できない場合には、自動発注端末装置1の記憶装置(HDD)から過去の消耗品情報及び総計情報を取得する(ステップS25)。

【0024】次に、供給量計算手段12によって、各消耗品の供給量を計算する(ステップS26)。消耗品情報から計算する場合には、実施例1のステップS4と同様に、総計情報から計算する場合には、実施例2のステップS16と同様に処理を行う。過去の消耗品情報及び総計情報から計算する場合には、まず、過去の消耗品情報及び総計情報から平均供給量を求める。例えば、図10(B)における複写機の場合、1日の平均供給量を求めると、記録紙A4で1167枚、記録紙A3で66枚となり、この平均供給量を必要な供給量とする。また、トナーや感光体のような消耗品は、供給量を常に1個とする。

【0025】

【発明の効果】請求項1の発明に対応する効果：ネットワークに接続されているOA機器の消耗品を自動的に発注することにより、消耗品の不足を事前に防ぎ、消耗品

は、総計情報を取得する(ステップS15)。総計情報には、図9に示した印刷日付、ユーザー名、印刷名、出力用紙、出力枚数を含み、例えば、図10のような総計情報が取得できる。

【0021】次に、供給量計算手段12によって、各消耗品の供給量を計算する(ステップS16)。ステップS14において消耗品情報が取得できた場合には、実施例1のステップS4と同様に必要な供給量を求める。ステップS14において消耗品情報が取得できなかった場合には、総計情報を取得し、(ステップS15)各OA機器の総計情報を参考にし、各記録紙毎の出力枚数(トータル)を求める。対象となる日付は、前回の発注処理を行った日付から今回の発注処理の日付とする。例えば、図10(A)におけるプリンタ及び図10(B)における複写機の出力枚数は、8月1日から8月2日までの日付を対象とすると、以下のようになる。

の不足により生じる印刷或いはコピーの作業の中断を防ぐことができる。

【0026】請求項2の発明に対応する効果：請求項1の発明に対応する効果に加えて、OA機器の供給装置の故障により正確に消耗品の残量の情報が取得できない場合でも、印刷結果、履歴等の総計情報から必要な供給量が計算でき、消耗品の不足を防ぐことができる。

【0027】請求項3の発明に対応する効果：ネットワークに接続されているOA機器の消耗品を自動的に発注することにより、消耗品の不足を事前に防ぎ、消耗品の不足により生じる印刷或いはコピーの作業の中断を防ぐことができる。特にOA機器の故障により消耗品の情報及び履歴等の総計情報が取得できない場合でも、過去の消耗品の情報及び履歴等の総計情報から必要な供給量が計算でき、消耗品の不足を防ぐことができる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】 本発明における自動発注システムの構成例を示す図である。

【図2】 本発明における自動発注システムを説明するためのブロック図である。

【図3】 本発明の自動発注システムにおける第1の実施例を説明するためのフロー図である。

【図4】 OA機器の消耗品の在庫情報の構成を示す図である。

【図5】 OA機器の消耗品の在庫情報のデータの例を示す図である。

【図6】 OA機器の消耗品情報の構成示す図である。

【図7】 OA機器の消耗品情報のデータの例を示す図である。

【図8】 本発明の自動発注システムにおける第2の実施例を説明するためのフロー図である。

【図9】 印刷結果を表す総計情報の構成を示す図であ

る。

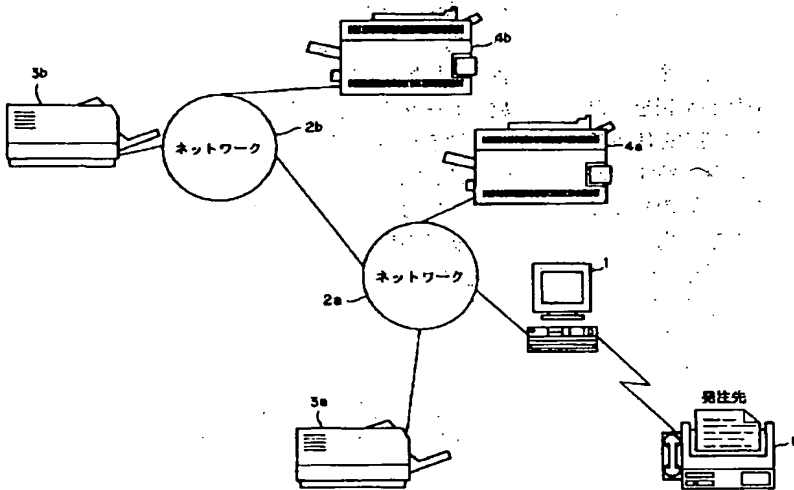
【図10】 印刷結果を表す総計情報のデータの例を示す図である。

【図11】 本発明の自動発注システムにおける第3の実施例を説明するためのフロー図である。

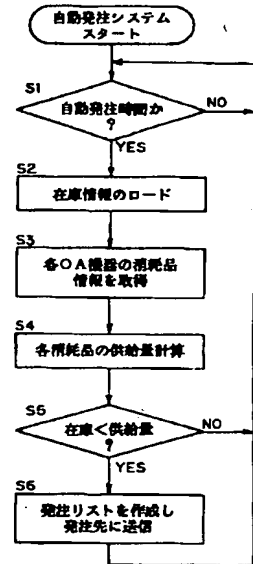
【符号の説明】

1…自動発注端末装置、2a、2b…ネットワーク、3a、3b…プリンタ、4a、4b…複写機、5…発注先、10…在庫情報管理手段、11…OA機器管理手段、12…供給量計算手段、13…欠品検出手段、14…発注手段。

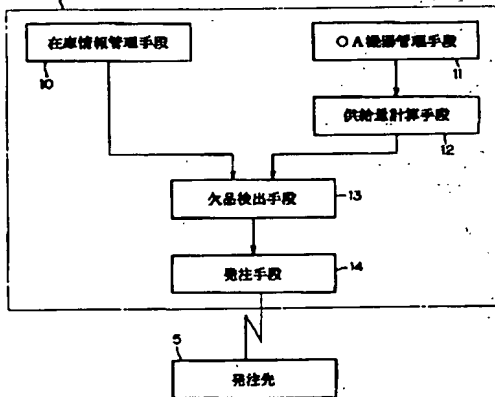
【図1】



【図3】



【図2】



【図5】

サプライコード	サプライ名	在庫量	発注中の量
0001	記録紙 A 4	15000枚	0枚
0002	記録紙 A 3	10000枚	10000枚
0010	プリンタ用トナー	10個	0個
0020	複写機用トナー	5個	5個
0100	プリンタ用感光体	5個	0個
0200	複写機用感光体	1個	4個

【図4】

サプライコード	サプライ名	在庫量	発注中の量
---------	-------	-----	-------

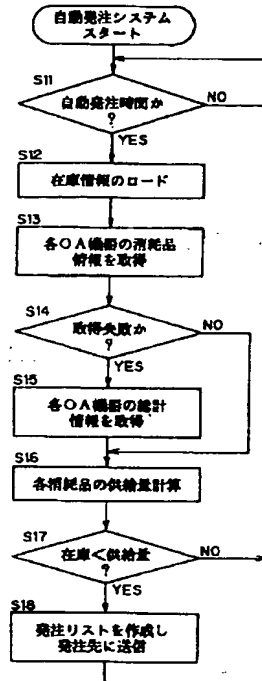
【図6】

サプライ名	最大供給量	残量
-------	-------	----

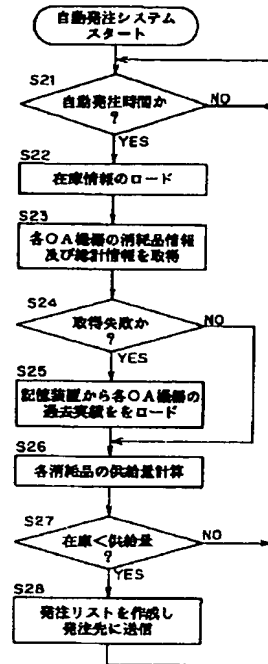
【図7】

サプライ名	最大供給量	残量
記録紙 A 4	3000枚	1500枚
記録紙 A 3	250枚	50枚
プリンタ用トナー	100%	50%
プリンタ用感光体	30000枚印刷可能	15000枚印刷

【図8】



【図11】



【図9】

印刷日付	ユーザ名	印刷名	出力用紙	出力枚数
------	------	-----	------	------

【図10】

プリンタ (A)

印刷日付	ユーザ名	印刷名	出力用紙	出力枚数
8/1	mtsu1	名簿.doc	A 4	7枚
8/1	klyohara	月間報告.doc	A 4	10枚
8/1	takahashi	テーマ報告	A 4	3枚
8/1	nagashima	source.cpp	A 4	30枚
8/1	不明	選案内図	A 3	5枚

(B)

複写機

印刷日付	ユーザ名	印刷名	出力用紙	出力枚数
8/1	—	—	A 4	1500枚
8/1	—	—	A 3	100枚
8/2	—	—	A 4	1000枚
8/2	—	—	A 3	50枚
8/3	—	—	A 4	1000枚
8/3	—	—	A 3	50枚



US 20010001582A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**  
**Walker**(10) **Pub. No.: US 2001/0001582 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: May 24, 2001**(54) **PROJECTION SCREEN APPARATUS  
INCLUDING HOLOGRAPHIC OPTICAL  
ELEMENT****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.<sup>7</sup> .....** G03B 21/56(52) **U.S. Cl. ....** 359/443; 359/460(75) **Inventor: Dale S. Walker, Houston, TX (US)****Correspondence Address:**  
**Fleshner and Kim LLP**  
**P O Box 221200**  
**Chantilly, VA 20153-1200 (US)**(73) **Assignee: DUKE UNIVERSITY**(\*) **Notice:** This is a publication of a continued prosecution application (CPA) filed under 37 CFR 1.53(d).(21) **Appl. No.: 09/521,236**(22) **Filed: Apr. 5, 2000****Related U.S. Application Data**(63) **Continuation of application No. 09/060,906, filed on Apr. 15, 1998.**(57) **ABSTRACT**

A screen apparatus includes a holographic optical element and a diffuser. The holographic optical element may be constructed using standard techniques known in the field of holography. The holographic optical element may be used to replace a typical Fresnel lens used in projection screen apparatuses. In operation, the holographic optical element receives image light from an image engine or projector and redirects the image light to the diffuser for scattering. The holographic optical element can be designed to substantially collimate, converge, or diverge the image light. The combination of the holographic optical element and the diffuser provides improved illumination uniformity that can be perceived by a viewer as the viewer moves in directions transverse to the screen apparatus. The screen apparatus may be designed to provide improved illumination uniformity to optimized or optimal locations in a viewing region. The screen apparatus may be advantageously employed in display apparatuses.

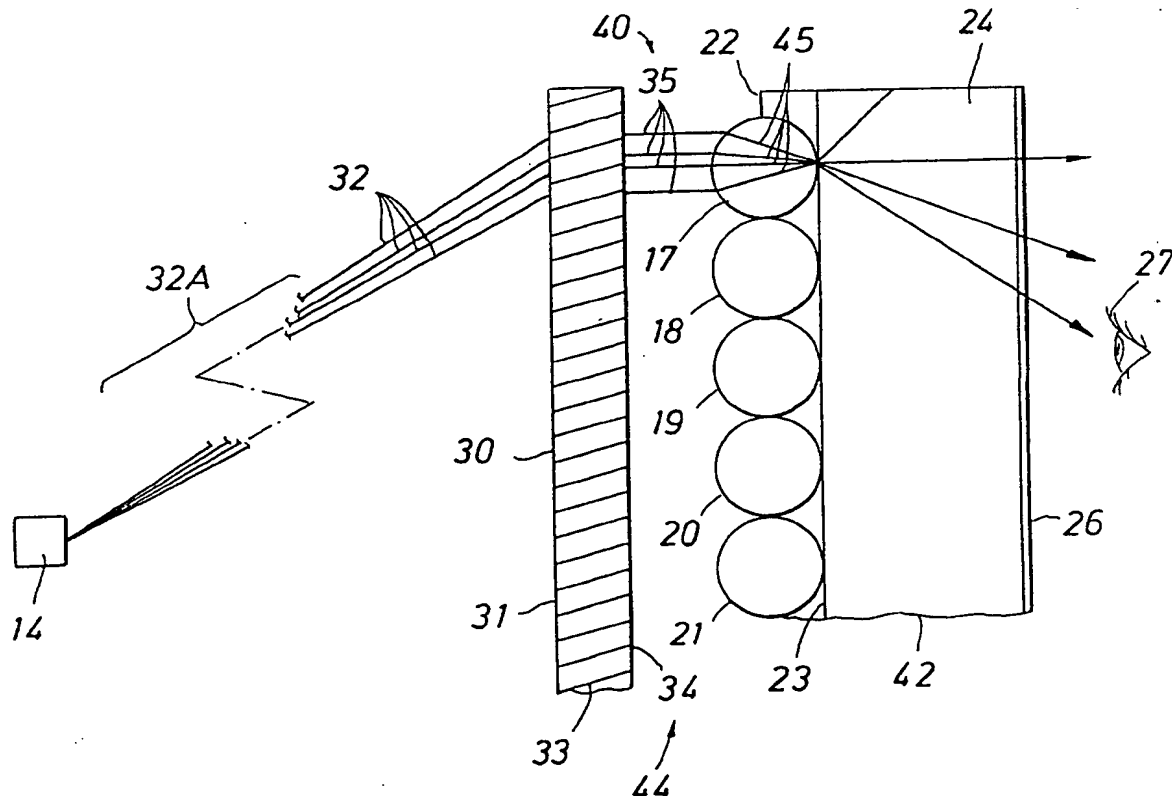


FIG.1  
(PRIOR ART)

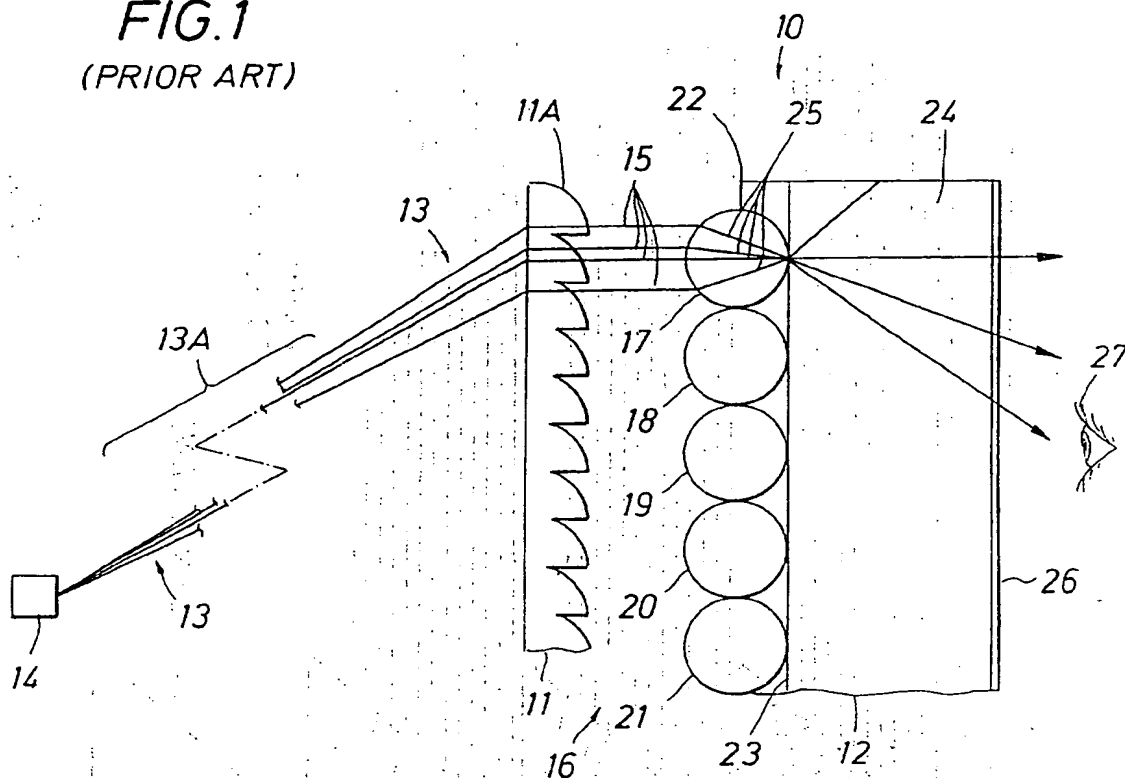
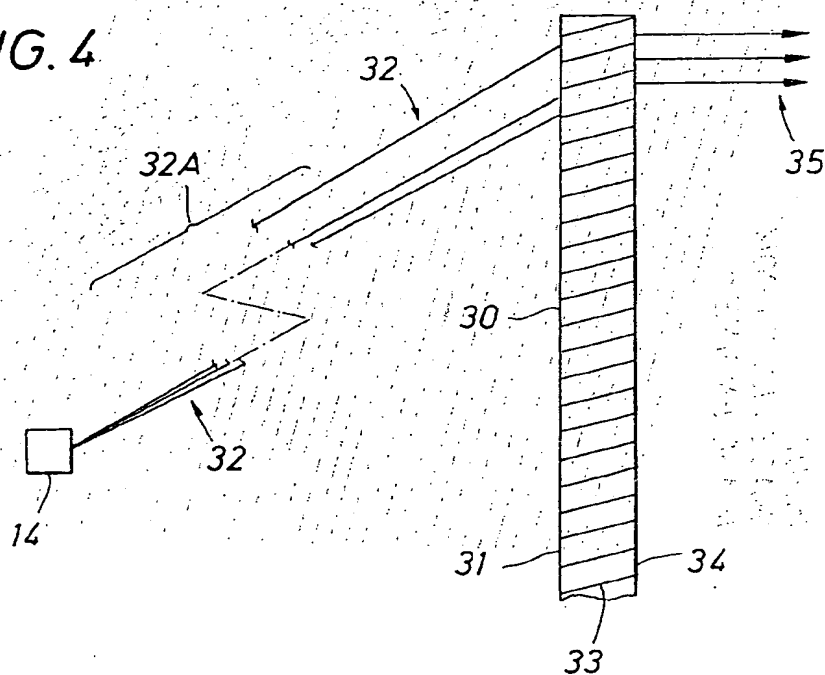
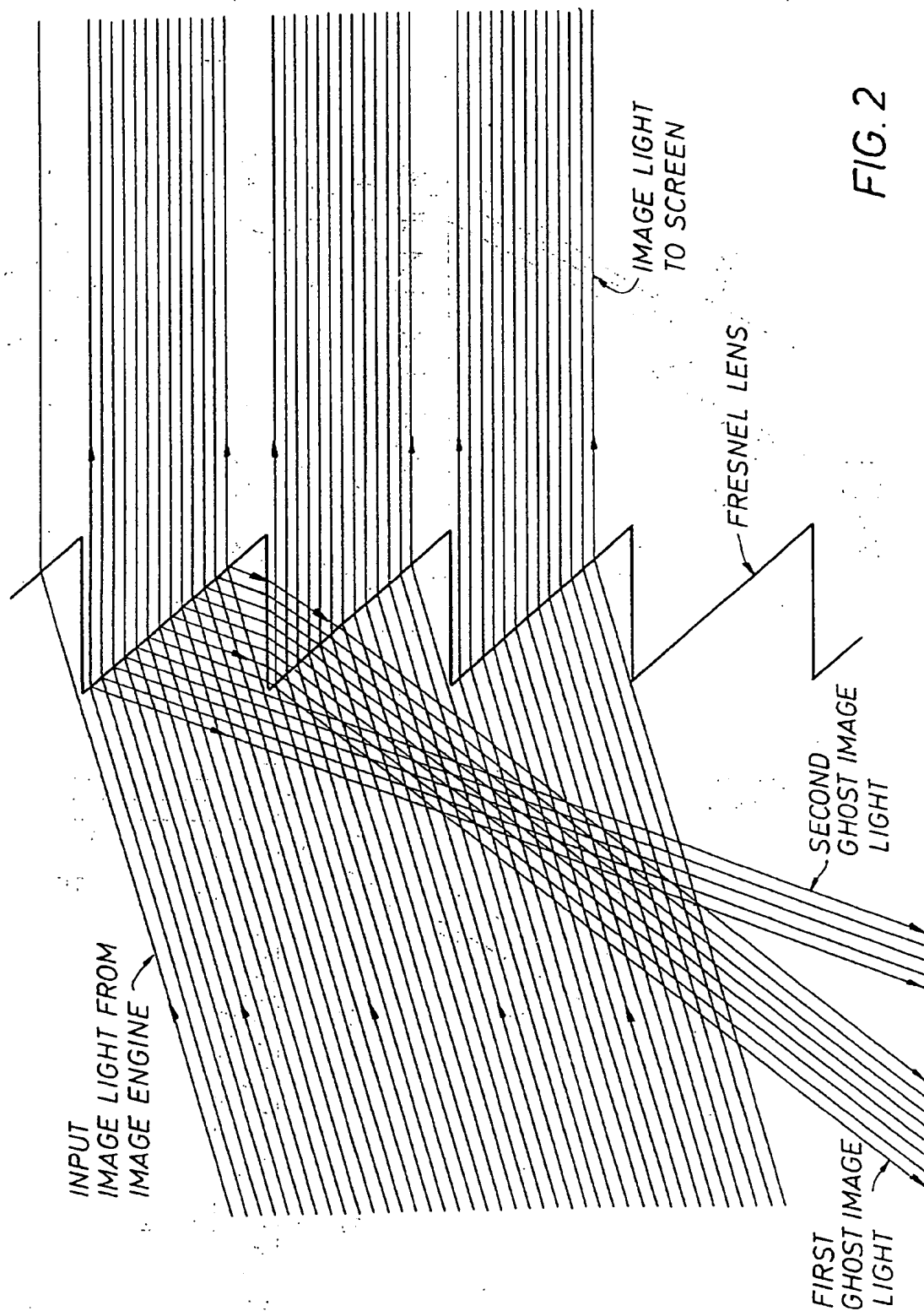


FIG. 4.





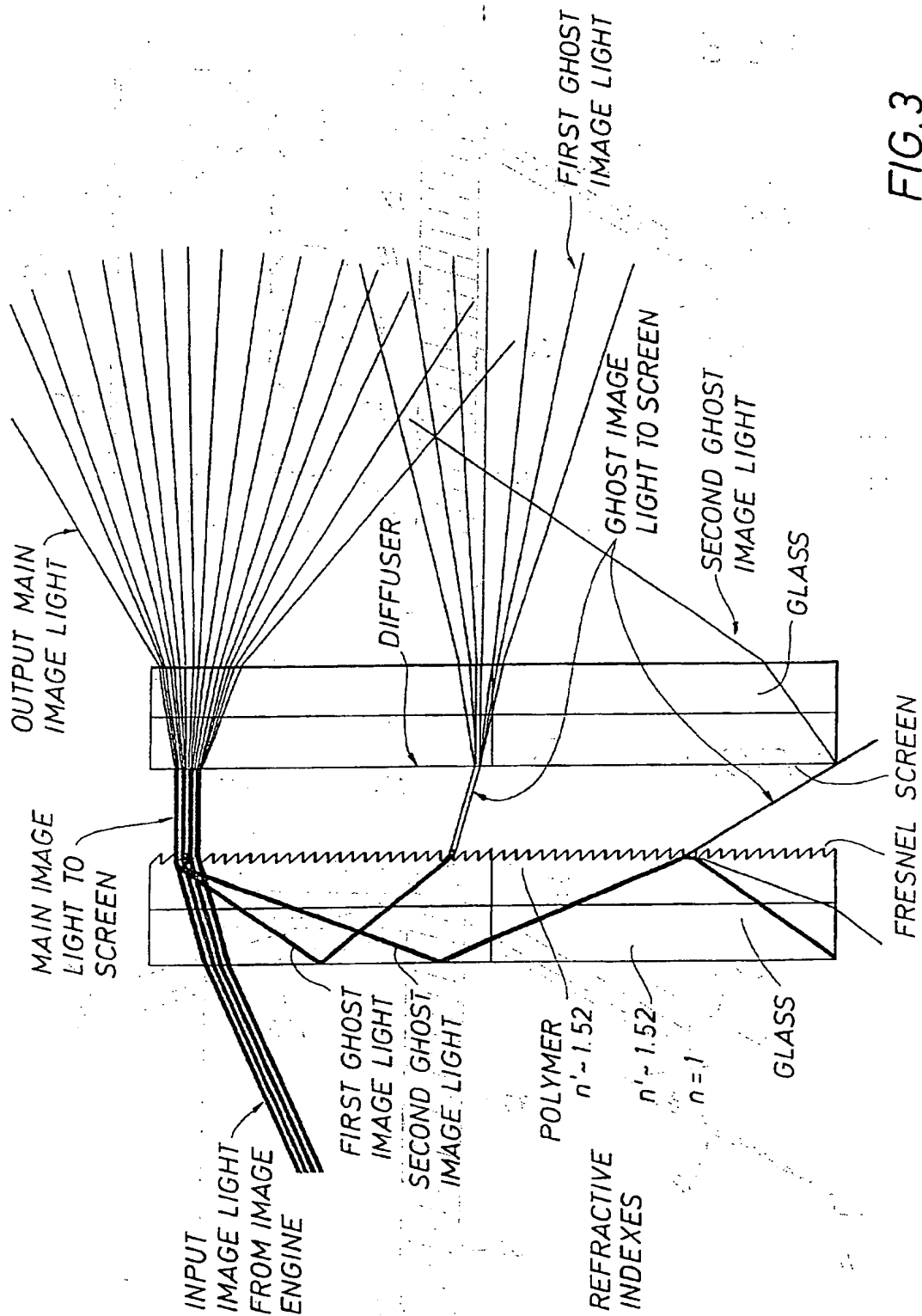


FIG. 5

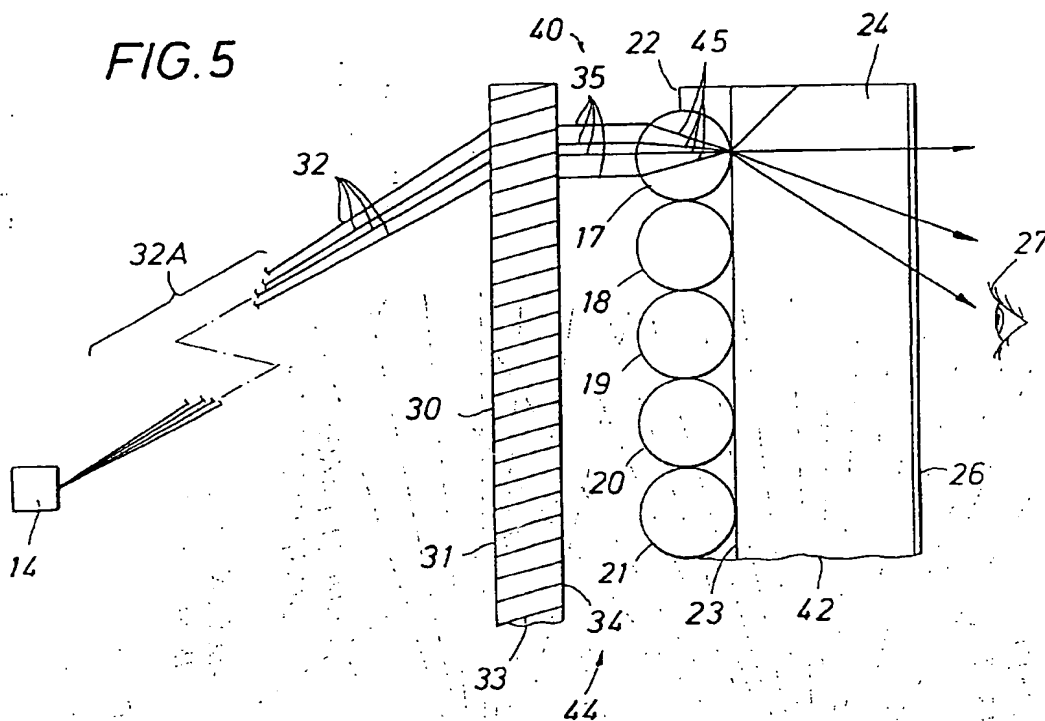
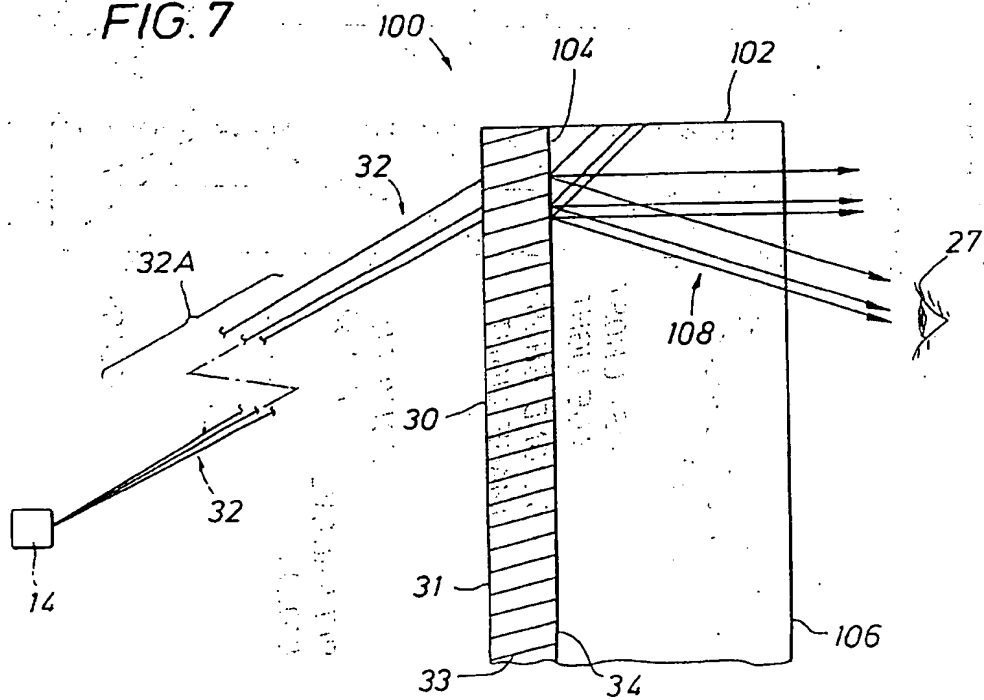
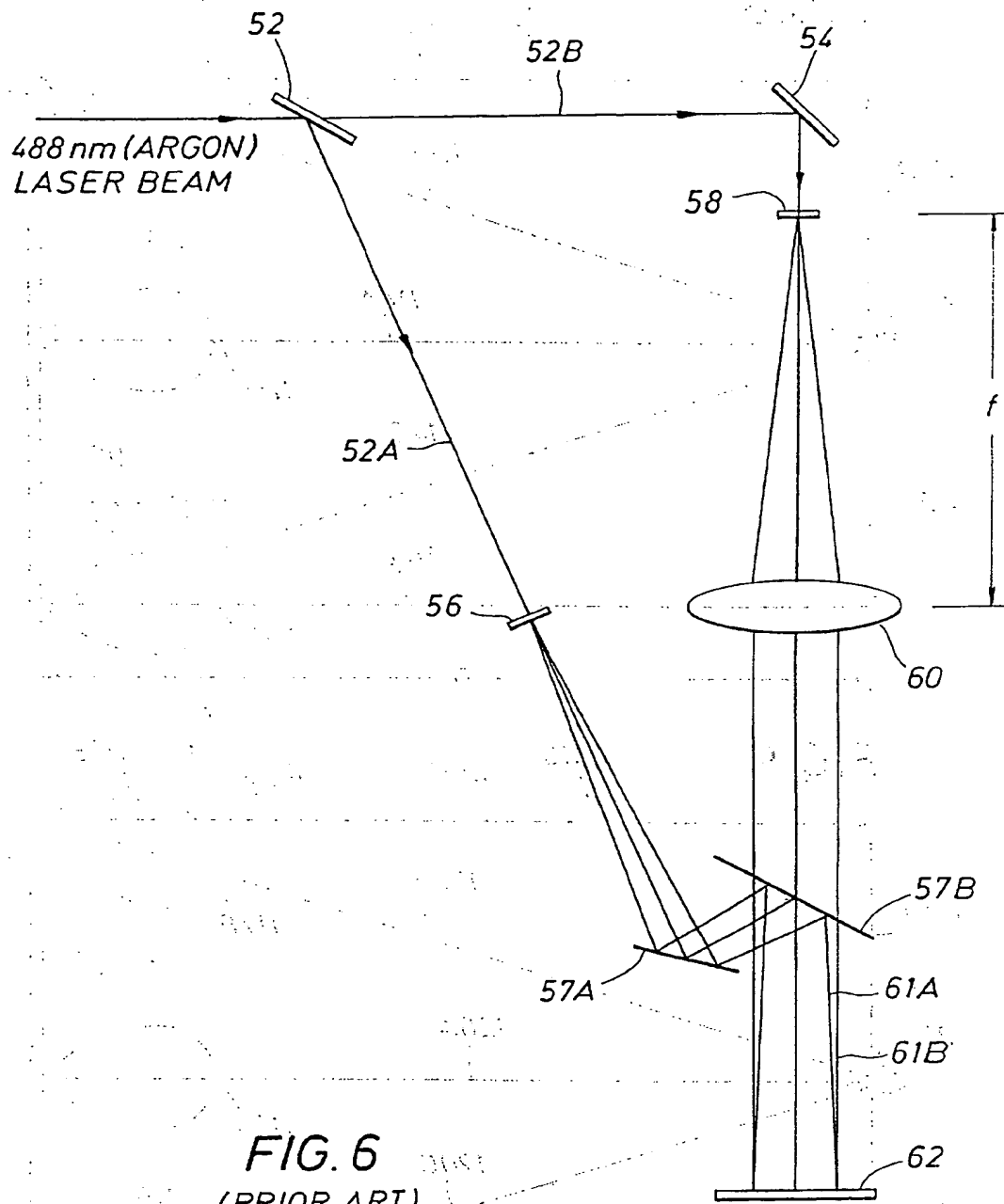


FIG. 7





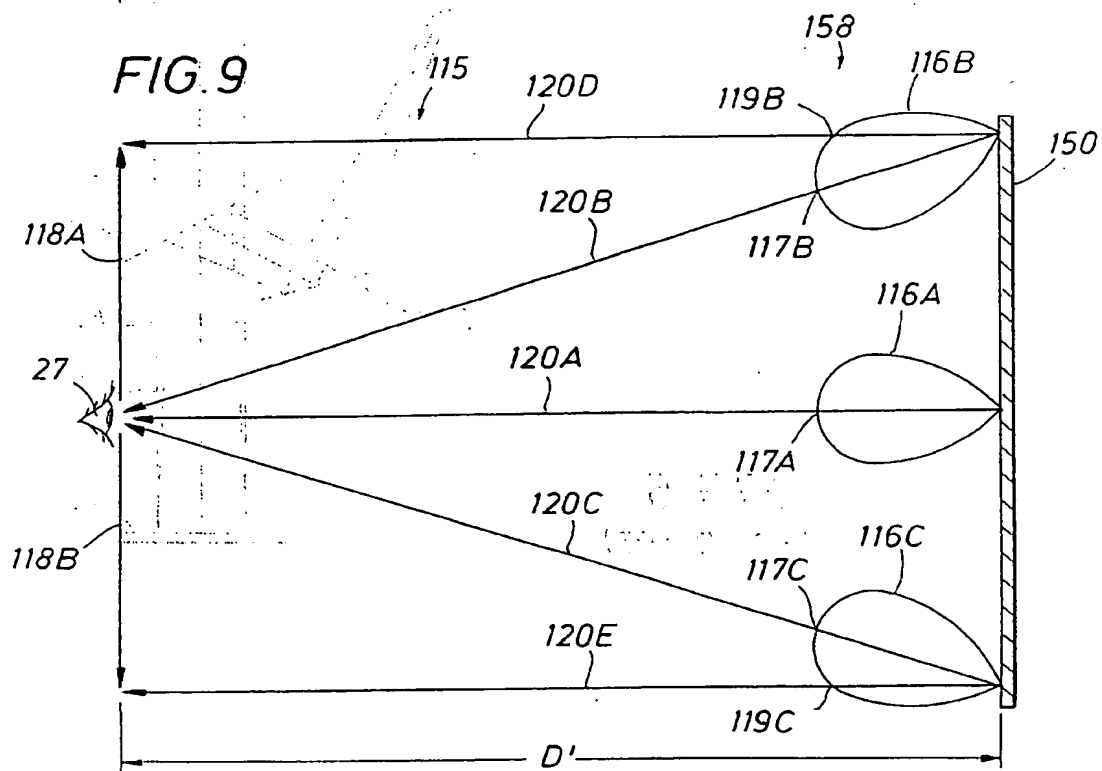
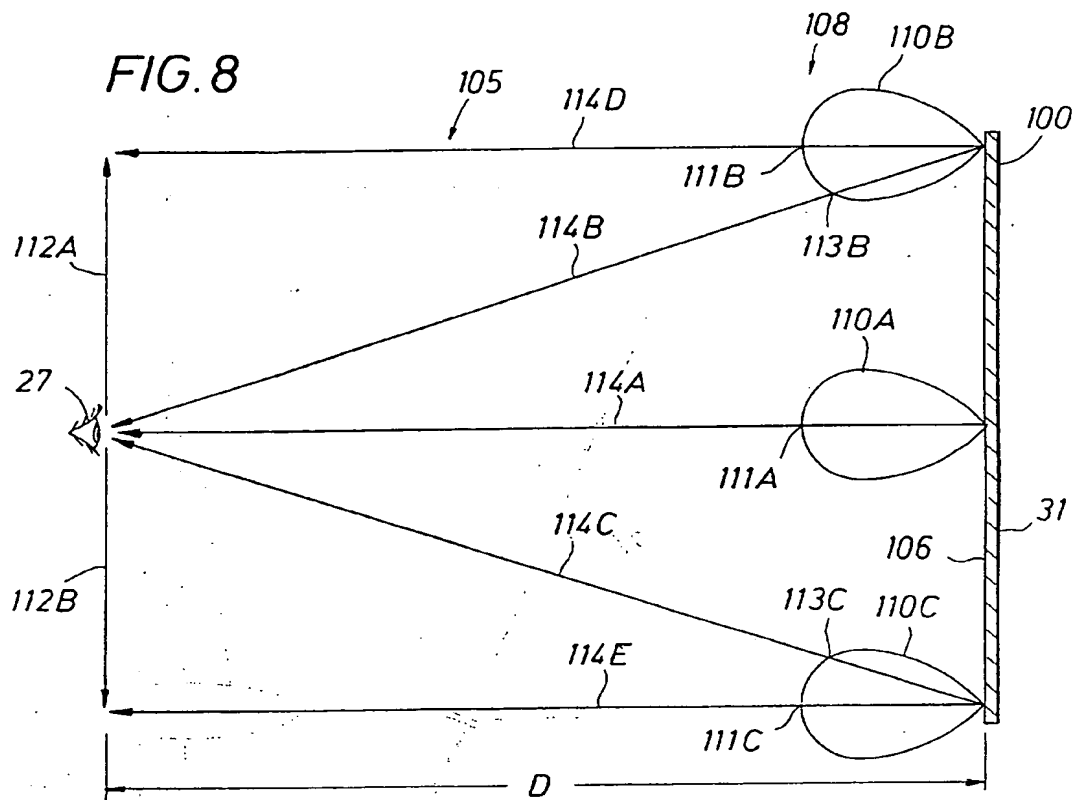


FIG. 10

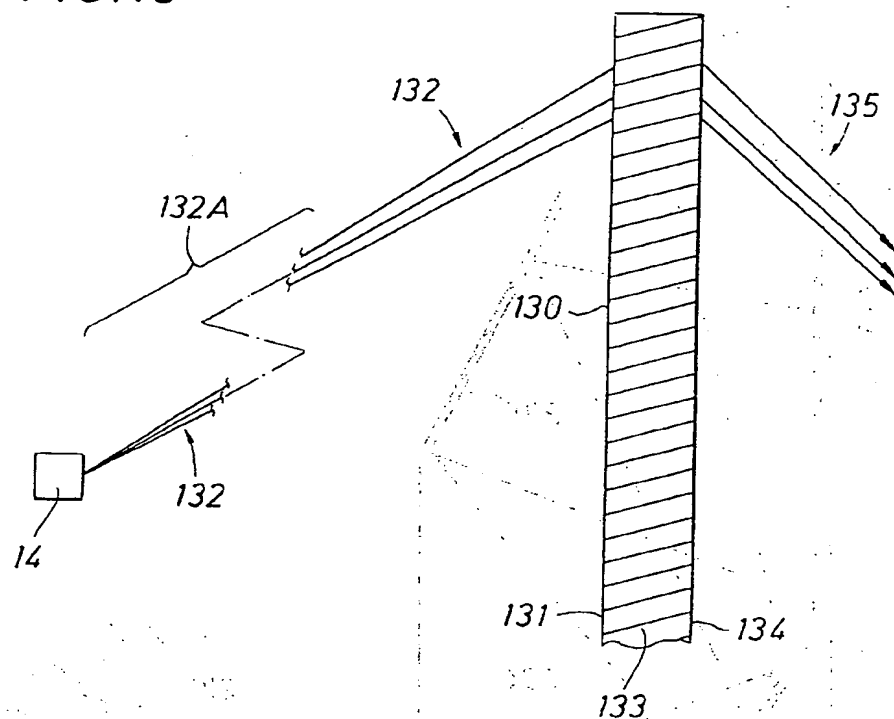
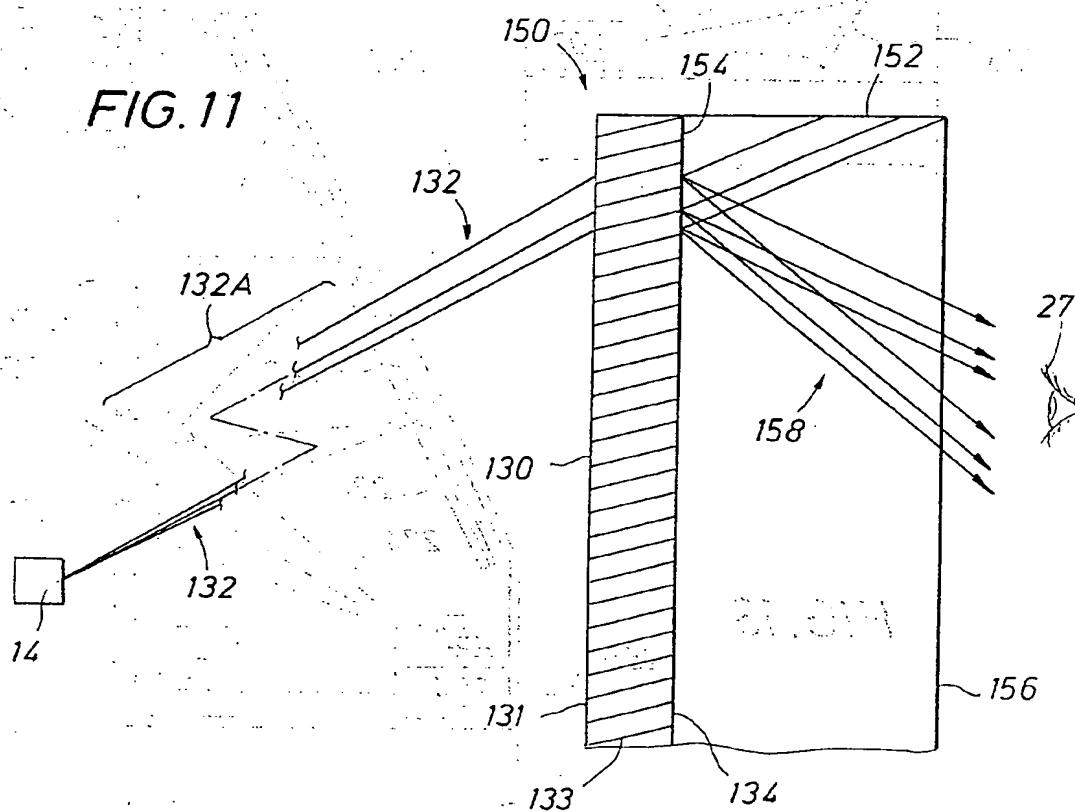
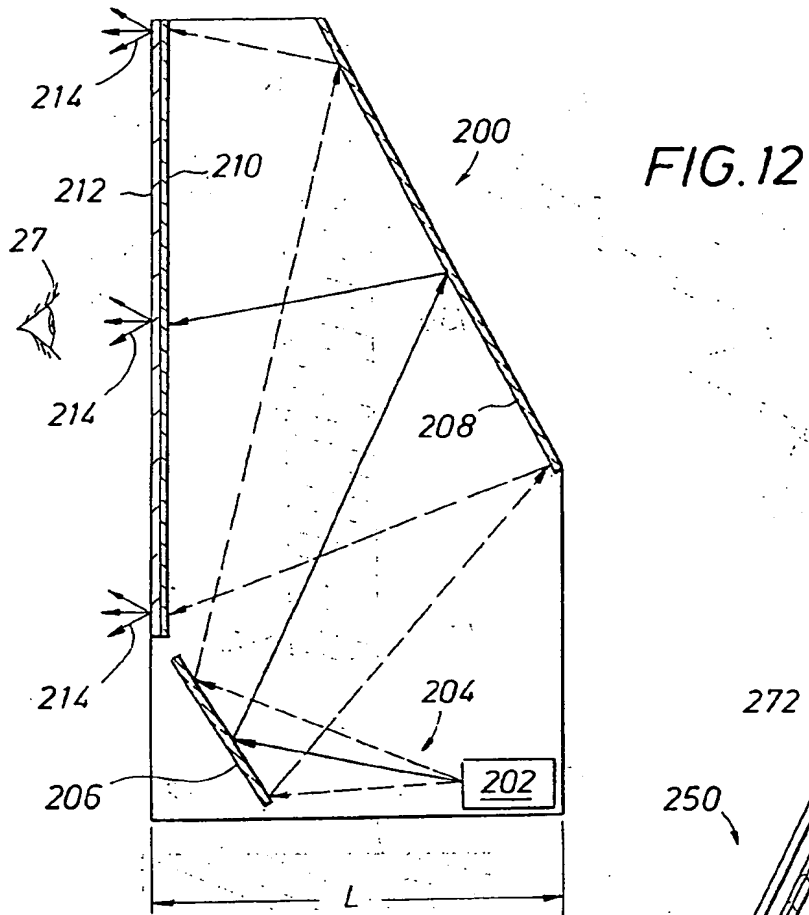
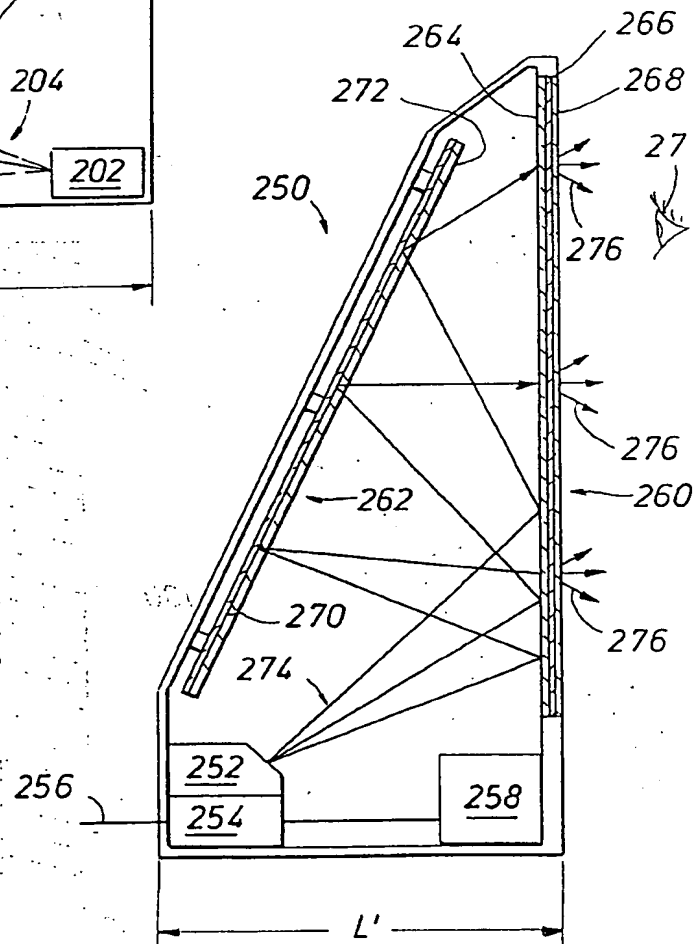


FIG. 11





**FIG. 13**



# PROJECTION SCREEN APPARATUS INCLUDING HOLOGRAPHIC OPTICAL ELEMENT

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

### [0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to projection systems and projection screens and, more particularly, to a projection screen apparatus that provides improved image illumination uniformity.

### [0003] 2. Description of Related Art

[0004] Light projection is used to display images on large surfaces, such as large computer displays or television screens. In front projection systems, an image beam is projected from an image source onto the front side of a reflection-type, angle transforming screen, which then reflects the light toward a viewer positioned in front of the screen. In a rear projection system, the image beam is projected onto the rear side of a transmission-type, angle transforming screen and transmitted toward a viewer located in front of the screen.

[0005] Referring to FIG. 1, wide angle projection systems that include a screen apparatus 10 are known to optimally use a conventional Fresnel lens 11 in combination with some diffusing element, such as a substrate covered with glass beads (e.g., a type of diffuser or diffusive screen) 12. The combination forms an imaging screen that produces an image. The Fresnel lens 11 and the diffuser 12 are held in relatively rigid or semi-rigid spaced apart relation to assure proper operation of the combination. Such screens, known generally in the art as "black matrix bead" or "BMB" screens, are commercially available from Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Company and others. Fresnel lenses are sold by Fresnel Optics and are manufactured by Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Company, for example, as used in devices such as overhead projectors. The Fresnel lens 11 element is constructed to provide the optical properties of a much thicker lens, however, with smaller size and weight. Concentric steps or discontinuities 11A allow these optical and physical properties to be realized. Each of the steps has a curved profile, in cross-section, that exhibits optical power to redirect incident light 13. The cut-out sections that define the steps reduce the overall size and weight.

[0006] In FIG. 1, the Fresnel lens 11 receives the incoming light 13 from a projection image engine or image projector 14 (e.g., a liquid crystal display imager, a light source, and a projection lens that produce image light in response to input video or other signals). The break in the light path of the light 13 shown in FIG. 1 is included to recognize that the light 13 may be processed or filtered, for example, projected by the projection or other lens (not shown), and is generally indicated by numeral 13A. The screen apparatus 10 and the image engine 14 are arranged such that a light beam exiting the Fresnel lens 11 is collimated, as shown by parallel rays of light 15. The collimated rays 15 pass across an air gap 16 to a matrix of glass beads 17-21 in the diffuser 12. The glass beads 17-21 are mounted upon an adhesive black mask layer 22 that is on a front surface 23 of a substrate 24 of the diffuser 12. As the collimated light rays 15 strike any of the glass beads 17-21, the rays are focused as light 25 in FIG. 1. The substrate 24 is light transparent so that a viewer 27 can see an image from

the light 25 that passes through a surface 26 (e.g., an acrylic, polystyrene, other polymer or like surface) of the screen apparatus 10. The screen apparatus 10 can be an "intelligent" television screen, having a large diagonal dimension, for example, substantially 60 inches, or a computer monitor screen.

[0007] For wide angle projection, there are currently no satisfactory methods of collimating light at a display screen. The conventional Fresnel lens 11 may create objectionable shadows and ghosts (i.e., ghost images from light scattered in undesired directions) that degrade the display image. The discontinuities in the Fresnel lens 11 lead to shadows and ghosts being introduced on illumination of the screen apparatus 10. The formation of a ghost image from discontinuous surfaces of a Fresnel lens is schematically illustrated in FIG. 2, and its appearance on the viewing side of a Fresnel lens/diffuser combination screen is schematically illustrated in FIG. 3. For discussion on the disadvantages of such stepped lenses, see *Antenna Theory* by Constantine A. Balanis, Harper and Row, New York, 1982, p. 650 and *Antenna Engineering Handbook*, H. Jasik (ed.) (Chapter 14 by S. B. Cohn), McGraw-Hill, New York, 1961, pp. 14-1 to 14-43. Moreover, the Fresnel lens 11 is also disadvantageous because it may be relatively expensive, easily damaged, have visible rings, and cannot be laminated (e.g., index matched) on both sides. Removing the Fresnel lens 11 and relying only on the diffusive screen 12 itself to achieve uniformity may result in a "hot spot" in the center of the screen and wasted light diffused out of the field of view of the viewer 27. The air gap 16 between the Fresnel lens 11 and the glass beads 17-21 also prevents the screen apparatus 10 from being as compact or as mechanically stable as might otherwise be possible.

[0008] The present invention is directed to overcoming or substantially limiting some or all of the above shortcomings of the Fresnel lens/diffuser combination screens, and the occurrence of the hot spot when no Fresnel lens is used.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] In one aspect, the invention features a screen apparatus. The screen apparatus includes a holographic optical element adapted to receive image light and to redirect the image light. The screen apparatus also includes a diffuser adapted to receive the redirected image light from the holographic optical element and to scatter the redirected image light.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] Other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description and upon reference to the drawings in which:

[0011] FIG. 1 is a side, cross-sectional view of a prior art BMB projection screen that uses a Fresnel lens in combination with a spaced apart bead-covered diffuser.

[0012] FIG. 2 is a schematic illustration of the formation of ghost image light from a Fresnel lens.

[0013] FIG. 3 is a schematic illustration of ghost image light appearing on the viewing side of a Fresnel lens/diffuser combination screen.

[0014] FIG. 4 is a side, cross-sectional view of a holographic optical element collimating light in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

[0015] FIG. 5 is a side, cross-sectional view of a screen apparatus in accordance with the embodiment in FIG. 4.

[0016] FIG. 6 is a plan view of a prior art system for forming a holographic optical element.

[0017] FIG. 7 is a side, cross-sectional view of a screen apparatus in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[0018] FIG. 8 is a plan view of the screen apparatus in FIG. 7 schematically showing image light features in a viewing region.

[0019] FIG. 9 is a plan view of a screen apparatus schematically showing image light features in a viewing region in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[0020] FIG. 10 is a side, cross-sectional view of a holographic optical element converging light in accordance with the embodiment in FIG. 9.

[0021] FIG. 11 is a side, cross-sectional view of a screen apparatus in accordance with the embodiment in FIGS. 9 and 10.

[0022] FIG. 12 is a side, cross-sectional view of a display apparatus in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[0023] FIG. 13 is a side, cross-sectional view of another display apparatus in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[0024] While the invention is susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, specific embodiments thereof have been shown by way of example in the drawings and are herein described in detail. It should be understood, however, that the description herein of specific embodiments is not intended to limit the invention to the particular forms disclosed, but on the contrary, the intention is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

#### DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

[0025] Illustrative embodiments of the invention are described below. In the interest of clarity, not all features of an actual implementation are described in this specification. It will of course be appreciated that in the development of any such actual embodiment, numerous implementation-specific decisions must be made to achieve the developers' specific goals, such as compliance with system-related, and business-related constraints, which will vary from one implementation to another. Moreover, it will be appreciated that such a development effort, even if complex and time-consuming, would be a routine undertaking for those of ordinary skill in the art having the benefit of this disclosure.

[0026] The present invention relates to an improved screen apparatus, for example, a projection screen, that may be employed in a front or rear projection system, such as a television, or in a computer monitor. Referring to FIGS. 4 and 5, a holographic optical element (HOE) 30 is included in a screen apparatus 40 (FIG. 5) in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention. The HOE 30 may be used to replace the Fresnel lens 11 discussed above, performs a

similar function as the Fresnel lens 11, but has distinct advantages that will be described below. The HOE 30 is recorded and processed (e.g., developed and possibly baked) to substantially collimate incoming image light 32 received from the image engine 14. Baking may be required for certain HOE (e.g., photopolymer) materials used to make the HOE 30, such as some materials that can be obtained from DuPont. Other types of HOE materials used to make the HOE 30, such as those for making surface relief, surface kineform, or embossed HOEs, may employ other methods that do not include baking. The image engine 14 may be similar to image engines described in prior, co-owned U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/730,818, filed Oct. 17, 1996, by Richard M. Knox, entitled "Image Projection System Engine Assembly," which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety. The image light 32 is similar to the image light 13 in FIG. 1, with a break labeled 32A in the light path being analogous to the break 13A in FIG. 1. For example, the light 32 may be processed or projected by a projection or other lens (not shown) to the HOE 30, as generally indicated by the numeral 32A. The incoming image light 32 may be diverging as it strikes the HOE 30. The light 32 passes through an input surface 31 and then an output surface 34 of the HOE 30 as substantially collimated light 35. The surfaces 31, 34 form a pair of opposed surfaces.

[0027] The HOE 30 may be formed using standard reference and object beam interference techniques known in the field of holography. One possible optical setup among many other possible setups that may be used to form the HOE 30 is depicted in FIG. 6, as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art. Light from a coherent light source (not shown), for example, an argon laser, is split by a variable beamsplitter 52 into two beams. One branch 52A of the split light passes through a first spatial filter 56 and another branch 52B is redirected by a reflector or mirror 54 through a second spatial filter 58. The light in the branch 52A passing through the spatial filter 56 is known in the art as the "reference" beam and the light in the branch 52B passing through the spatial filter 58 is known as the "object" beam. Such terms as reference and object would be considered somewhat arbitrary in other implementations that may be used to record holograms, as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art. The spatial filters 56, 58 produce substantially uniform light intensity in a transverse direction across their output. The reference and object beams 52A, 52B both diverge after passing through the spatial filters 56, 58. The light from the spatial filter 56 is reflected from a substantially 100% reflective mirror 57A to a substantially 50% reflective/50% transmissive (e.g., silvered) mirror 57B. A portion 61A of the light 52A reflects from the mirror 57B and then impinges on a photosensitive material 62 (e.g., a photographic plate or photopolymer materials, such as those available from DuPont or Polaroid) that is used to record the HOE 30. The light passing through the spatial filter 58 is first directed to pass through a fast (e.g., F/1) collimating lens or collimator 60 spaced at approximately its focal length (f) from the spatial filter 58. This results in approximately collimated light being produced, a portion 61B of which then passes through the mirror 57B and is incident on the photosensitive material 62. The reference and object beams 52A, 52B (i.e., the portions 61A, 61B) will interfere with each other to form a hologram as an interference pattern or fringes in the photosensitive material 62, shown generally as numeral 33 in FIGS. 4-5. Such a pattern results because both

the reference beam 52A and the object beam 52B are derived from a substantially coherent source.

[0028] Once the HOE 30 is recorded and developed, it is possible to reproduce the reference beam 52A (i.e., the portion 61A) by simply placing the HOE 30 approximately in its original position and introducing only the same or a similar object beam 52B (i.e., the portion 61B). It is also possible to reproduce the object beam 52B by introducing only the same or a similar reference beam 52A. In the present invention, the emphasis will be mainly on the object beam 52B being reproduced by the same or a similar reference beam 52A, although applications involving reproduction of the reference beam 52A by the object beam 52B in other embodiments will be appreciated by those skilled in the art.

[0029] For a transmission-type hologram, the introduction of the reference beam will reproduce the object beam, which is transmitted by the recorded hologram. The reproduced, substantially collimated object beam light is directed into, what is termed in the art, the "first" order of diffraction of the reference beam. A portion of the reference beam (approximately 4%) will pass through the hologram in other orders, most significantly in the "zero" order of diffraction of the reference beam.

[0030] After recording and developing, the hologram may or may not be baked. Baking is preferable in some embodiments (e.g., if DuPont photopolymer is used), however, as it allows the interference fringes 33 produced by the interfering light to be stabilized (i.e., substantially, fixed). After baking, the hologram will perform substantially similarly to its performance before baking. The hologram recorded in such a manner may be used in the screen apparatus 40 in FIG. 5 as the HOE 30 to substantially collimate the image light 32 as the light 35. The image light 32 is introduced to the HOE 30 similarly to the reference beam light in FIG. 6, i.e., at approximately the same angle and divergence.

[0031] Although the HOE 30 is initially recorded with substantially coherent laser light of narrow wavelength or color, white light, "quasi"-white light, or other colored light from the image engine 14 will be nearly collimated when introduced in place of the reference beam light used to record the HOE 30. This is true, even though the HOE 30 may exhibit some chromatic dispersion. Quasi-white light, in the context of the present invention, refers to light output from a light source that may be deficient in one or more colors, but, nevertheless, produces substantially white light.

[0032] Referring again to FIG. 5, the screen apparatus 40 includes a diffuser or diffusive screen 42 much like the diffuser 12 shown in FIG. 1. The collimated light 35 is focused by the glass bead 17 as light 45 and viewed as an image by the viewer 27 from the image light 45 that passes through the surface 26 after passing through the substrate 24, as described above. The diffuser 42, in the particular embodiment illustrated, is held in spaced apart relation to the HOE 30, spaced by a small air gap 44. The effects of the chromatic dispersion discussed above, that spreads light colors differently, may be minimized by making the air gap 44 as narrow as possible (e.g., on the order of microns) or by eliminating it altogether, as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art. Moreover, the use of a no-beaded screen, such as a bulk diffusing screen, may help avoid or reduce some of these chromatic dispersion effects, as will be discussed below.

[0033] The HOE 30 offers distinct advantages over the Fresnel lens 11 in FIG. 1 for collimating the image light. There is no ghost image, light or shadowing, such as that produced by the Fresnel lens 11. An air gap, like the air gap 44, is not necessarily required, or may be substantially reduced, depending on screen apparatus design, as will be described below. The HOE 30/diffuser 42 combination may be both flat and flexible. There may be no need to hold the HOE 30 and the diffuser 42 in rigid or semi-rigid spaced apart relation to assure proper operation. Moreover, the HOE 30 may be lighter in weight and cheaper than the typical Fresnel lens 11.

[0034] Referring to FIG. 7, a screen apparatus 100 is illustrated in accordance with a second embodiment of the invention. The screen apparatus 100 includes the HOE 30 layered or coated on, bonded or adjacent to, or otherwise suitably applied to, a diffusive screen or diffuser 102. Suitable bonding may be achieved with an index matching optical adhesive or material (not shown) applied between the surface 34 of the HOE 30 and a first surface 104 of the diffuser 102, as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art. The diffuser 102 may be formed of a mixture of any two (or more) appropriate immiscible materials having different indices of refraction. An example of such materials could be two immiscible polymers that have indices of refraction  $n=1.5$  and  $n'=1.52$ , respectively. Another possible material for the diffuser 102 includes  $\text{TiO}_2$  or other like materials that, when dispersed as particles or particulate clusters of appropriate size in polymer materials (e.g., a polymer matrix), such as acrylic or other like materials, can act as image light scatterers. The lighter weight of the immiscible materials will form a distribution of spaced apart globules (not shown) of appropriate size within the higher weight material. Each individual globule will tend to stay together due to surface tension effects. These globules, when incorporated in the diffuser 102, will act as light scatterers for light incident. Commercially available diffusers that may be used for the diffuser 102 are available from Nashua in their "MICROSHARP" technology product line, and other diffusers are available from Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Company among other manufacturers or suppliers. Many types of such diffusers are known in the art.

[0035] In FIG. 7, as before, the imaging light 32 incident on the surface 31 of the HOE 30 is collimated by the HOE 30 on transmission. The collimated light exiting through the surface 34 of the HOE 30 and entering the diffuser 102 through the surface 104 is scattered as it passes through the diffuser 102 as light 108. The effects of chromatic dispersion discussed above should be diminished because there is no air gap or, substantially no air gap between the HOE 30 and the diffuser 102 (although a small air gap may be tolerable under certain circumstances in certain embodiments if chromatic dispersion is not too large). The imaging light 108 passes out of the diffuser 102, and the viewer 27, suitably positioned, can see, an image from the image light 108 that passes through a surface 106 of the diffuser 102.

[0036] The screen apparatus 100, because of the operation of the HOE 30 and the diffuser 102, will provide relative uniformity of the intensity of the imaging light 108 if the viewer moves his or her head transversely while viewing an image on the surface 106. This may be understood by considering FIG. 8, which schematically illustrates polar plots of forward (power) gain profiles or patterns 110A,

110B, 110C for the light 108 (FIG. 7) exiting the diffuser 102 in a region 105. Similar plots could be constructed for the embodiments shown in FIG. 5, which also provides substantially collimated light upon image light passage through the HOE 30. The forward gain profiles 110A, 110B, 110C have their maxima generally centered in a direction substantially normal to the surface 106 of the diffuser 102 due to the image light 108 being substantially collimated by the HOE 30. A maximum 111A of the gain profile 110A is directed toward the viewer 27, who is located substantially in a central (or other) position for viewing the screen apparatus 100, as generally indicated by the arrow 114A in FIG. 8. The gain profiles 110B, 110C correspond to portions of the light 108 that is scattered from areas of the diffuser 102 near edges of the diffuser 102. These gain profiles do not, however, have their gain profile maxima 111B, 111C directed toward the viewer 27 in this position, as generally indicated by the arrows 114D and 114E. Instead, the light 108, directed toward the viewer 27 from the gain profiles 110B, 110C, have below-maxima values 113B, 113C, as generally indicated by the arrows 114B, 114C.

[0037] The gain profiles 110A, 110B, and 110C in FIG. 8 can give a sense of how image light intensity can vary as the viewer 27 moves transversely in front of the screen apparatus 100. As the viewer 27 moves in either of directions 112A, 112B, at some point, there will be a noticeable increase in one of the gain profile values 110B, 110C of the image light directed toward the viewer 27, and a noticeable decrease in the other. The value of the gain profile 110A will not, however, change that rapidly. Therefore, over a reasonable transverse distance range at a distance "D" in front of the screen apparatus 100, the intensity will be relatively uniform because of the operation of the HOE 30 and the diffuser 102. The distance D can be in a range that would be typical for viewing a particular device, such as a computer monitor, a large or small television screen, or projection screen, in a setting, such as a room. D will, in general, depend on the size of the room, the size of the screen apparatus, and other factors that bear on the particular application.

[0038] FIG. 9, which is similar to FIG. 8, schematically illustrates polar plots of gain profiles 116A, 116B, 116C of scattered image light 158 from a screen apparatus 150 in a region 115. Maxima 117A, 117B, 117C in the gain profiles 116A, 116B, 116C in FIG. 9 are not all forward-directed, substantially normal to a viewing surface of the screen apparatus 150. Instead, the maxima in the gain profiles are substantially directed toward a particular (e.g., a central) viewing region or position where the viewer 27 can view an image displayed on the screen apparatus 150. For example, while the gain profile 116A is generally directed along an arrow 120A in the forward direction, the gain profiles 116B, 116C are angularly directed along arrows 120B, 120C, respectively. Gain profile values 119B, 119C for the forward directed image light of the gain profiles 116B, 116C have values further below their respective maxima 117B, 117C compared to the maxima 111B, 111C in FIG. 8. Such gain profiles as 116A, 116B, 116C may be preferable for image viewing and substantially maintaining image light intensity uniformity or illumination uniformity as the viewer 27 moves in transverse directions, i.e., along the directions of arrows 118A, 118B, compared to the gain profiles in FIG. 8. The gain profiles in FIG. 9 can give a sense of maintaining image uniformity better than the gain profiles illustrated in

FIG. 8. For example, in FIG. 9, as the viewer 27 moves over a limited range in either of the directions 118A, 118B at a distance "D" from the screen apparatus 150, the variation between the values of the gain profiles 116B, 116C may be less than that between the values of the gain profiles 110B, 110C in FIG. 8. On the other hand, the corresponding variation in the values of the gain profile 116A may be similar to the variation of the values of the gain profile 110A in FIG. 8. The typical viewing distance D' will have analogous dependencies as those of the viewing distance D discussed above. D' will be a function of the specific design involved.

[0039] Reference is now made to FIGS. 10 and 11 for an implementation of the screen apparatus 150 in accordance with a third embodiment of the invention. As will be appreciated by those of skill in the art of holography, modifications of the optical setup shown in FIG. 6 can be made that make it possible to record a hologram that converges (or diverges in other embodiments) light instead of collimating light. This can be accomplished, for example, by moving the lens 60 relative to the spatial filter 58 and the photosensitive material 62. Once recorded with reference and object beams as interference fringes 133, and then developed and possibly baked, as discussed above, the converging hologram (the remaining discussion will emphasize converging light instead of diverging light) could be repositioned in its original position with respect to the same or a similar reference beam for reproducing the converging object beam. In FIG. 10, such a hologram is shown as an HOE 130, which is positioned to receive image light 132 from the image engine 14. The processing or filtering (e.g., projecting by a projection or other lens, not shown) of the light 132 is generally indicated by a break in the light path and numeral 132A, as similarly discussed above. The light 132 is incident on the HOE 130 through a first surface 131 and exits the HOE 130 through a second surface 134 as converging image light 135.

[0040] Referring to FIG. 11, the screen apparatus 150 is shown, which includes the HOE 130 and a diffusive screen or diffuser 152. The screen apparatus 150 is similar to the screen apparatus 100. The HOE 130 and the diffuser 152 are layered, coated, bonded, adjacent, or suitably applied together, as similarly discussed above for the screen apparatus 100 in FIG. 7.

[0041] In operation, the incident image light 132 passes through the first surface 131 and exits the second surface 134 of the HOE 130. Upon entering the diffuser 152 (similar to the diffuser 102 described above) through a first surface 154, the light 132 is scattered as image light 158, which exits the diffuser 152 through a second surface 156. The viewer 27, suitably positioned in front of the screen apparatus 150, can see an image produced by the image light 158 at the surface 156. The position of the viewer 27 in FIG. 11 may be as shown in FIG. 9, with the light 158 exhibiting gain profile maxima directed to the viewer 27. The image light 158 in FIG. 11 is shown following paths in a substantially more downward (or centralized) direction compared to the image light 108 in FIG. 7. In FIG. 11, the direction taken by the light 158 would be expected because of the converging property of the HOE 130 compared to the collimating property of the HOE 30, and should lead to substantially more uniform image illumination as the viewer 27 moves transverse to the screen apparatus 150.

[0042] It is contemplated that the HOE 130 (or HOE 30) could be suitably designed, using the standard techniques of holography, to direct the image light 158 (or 108) to particular optimized (or optimal) positions or other locations of the viewer 27 in the region 115 in FIG. 9 (or 105 in FIG. 8), as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art. These locations may be the best for viewing high quality images. For example, the screen apparatus could be designed to be suspended from a ceiling in a room and substantially direct its best and most uniform image downward in the room to a viewing audience below, rather than straight out along a normal direction to the screen apparatus.

[0043] The screen apparatuses 40, 100, and 150 described above may be advantageously employed in "folded" display apparatuses 200 and 250 shown in FIGS. 12 and 13, respectively, in accordance with fourth and fifth embodiments of the invention. The display apparatuses 200 and 250 may form part of a computer monitor or television display and are similar to projection systems described in prior, co-owned U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/581,108, filed Dec. 29, 1995, by Richard M. Knox, entitled "Projecting Images" and in European Pat. app. No. 96309443.8, EPO783133A1, filed Dec. 23, 1996, by Richard M. Knox et al., entitled "Projecting Images," published Jul. 9, 1997, which are incorporated by reference herein in their entirety. The folded optical paths in the display apparatuses 200 and 250 enables the size of these image projection apparatuses to be reduced compared to other types of display apparatuses. For example, the "footprint" dimensions "L" and "L" may be made smaller by folding, which reduces the apparent projection lengths in these apparatuses.

[0044] Referring to FIG. 12, the display apparatus 200 includes an image engine or projector 202, which may be similar to the image engine 14 described above. The image engine 202 may also be similar to image engines described in the aforementioned U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/730,818. The image engine outputs image light 204 in response to input signals, for example, electronic, video, or other signals received from an antenna, cable, computer, or controller. The image light 204 reflects off a lower mirror or reflector 206 to a higher mirror or reflector 208. The light 204 is then reflected by the upper mirror or reflector 208 and is directed to an HOE 210. The HOE 210 may be similar to the HOEs 30, 130, depending on the design of the display apparatus 200. The image light exiting the HOE 210 could, therefore, be collimated, converging, or diverging, according to the particular design, as it enters a diffusive screen or diffuser 212, layered or coated on, bonded or adjacent to, or otherwise applied to the HOE 210. The diffuser 212 may be similar to any one of the diffusers 42, 102, or 152, according to the design. The diffuser 212 scatters the image light as light 214, which the viewer 27 can see as forming an image at the diffuser 212 of the display apparatus 200.

[0045] Referring to FIG. 13, the display apparatus 250 is shown, which includes an image engine or projector 252, a signal splitter 254, an input cable 256, a sound system 258, a screen apparatus 260, and a back mirror or reflector 262. The image engine 252 may be similar to image engines described above and in the aforementioned U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/730,818. The screen apparatus 260 includes a polarizing reflector 264, a HOE 266, and a diffusive screen or diffuser 268, which, depending on the specific design, may be layered, coated, bonded (e.g., with

index matching adhesive), laminated (e.g., as one element), or otherwise applied together in the order shown in FIG. 13. The polarizing reflector 264, the HOE 266, and the diffuser 268 may be held together in spaced apart relation (some chromatic dispersion will occur if the HOE 266 and the diffuser 268 are spaced apart) or not in spaced apart relation (i.e., substantially with no air gaps). An example of a material that may be used for the polarizing reflector 264 is double brightness enhancement film (DBEF), also called multilayered optical film (MOF), commercially available from Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Company, or other wide-angle polarizing reflector materials. The polarizing reflector 264 has a characteristic of preferentially reflecting light of a first linear polarization and preferentially transmitting light of a second linear polarization, orthogonal to the first polarization light. Depending on the design of the display apparatus 250, the HOE 266 may be similar to one of the HOEs 30, 130 described above, i.e., a collimating, converging, or diverging HOE. Likewise, depending on the design, the diffuser 268 may be any one of the diffusers 42, 102, or 152 described above.

[0046] The back reflector 262 includes a mirror or reflector 270 and an achromatic retarder 272 that, depending on the design, may be layered, coated, bonded (e.g., with index matching adhesive), adjacent or otherwise applied together in the order shown in FIG. 13. The back mirror or reflector 270 and the achromatic retarder 272 may be held together in spaced apart relation or not in spaced apart relation (i.e., substantially with no air gaps). Suitable achromatic retarders may be designed to accommodate a spaced apart arrangement, as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art.

[0047] In operating the display apparatus 250, the image engine 252 receives an electronic signal through the input cable 256 and provides the signal to the signal splitter 254. The signal splitter 254 divides the signal into, for example, a video signal and an audio signal, and provides these signals to the image engine 252 and the sound system 258, respectively. The image engine 252 converts the video signal into projected image light 274. The electronic signal received by the cable 256 may be any type of signal containing video information, such as a television signal received by an antenna or over cable lines, or a computer video signal received through a computer video cable. The audio signal and the sound system are optional.

[0048] The image light 274 may be polarized in the image engine 252 in a light source thereof (not shown) or by a polarizer (not shown) that may be employed external to the image engine 252 to polarize the image light in the first polarization discussed above. In a first instance, the image light 274 output from the image engine 252 and polarized in the first polarization direction is reflected by the polarizing reflector 264 toward the back reflector 262. The reflected image light 274 passes through the achromatic retarder 272 a first time, is reflected by the back mirror or reflector 270, and passes through the achromatic retarder 272 a second time directed again toward the screen apparatus 260. The achromatic retarder 272 is designed to have an optical thickness (substantially one-quarter wave), such that the double pass of the image light 274 in the first polarization will undergo an effective half-wave polarization shift or rotation of substantially 90 degrees. Thus, the image light 274 now directed toward the screen apparatus will substantially be in the second polarization and will substantially

pass through the polarizing reflector 264 to the HOE 266. The HOE 266 collimates, converges, or diverges this light, according to the design, which is subsequently scattered by the diffuser 268 as image light 276. The viewer 27 can then observe an image produced by the image light 276 at the diffuser 268 of the screen apparatus 260, in similarity to the descriptions given above.

[0049] A method of making the screen apparatus (e.g., 100, 150 shown in FIGS. 7 and 11) may be set forth in accordance with a sixth embodiment of the invention. The hologram or HOE (e.g., HOEs 30, 130) for the screen apparatus may be formed by the process described above (for forming collimating, converging, or diverging HOEs), including recording in an appropriate optical setup using reference and object beams. The object beam may be produced by a collimating lens, such as the lens 60 in FIG. 6, or, in other embodiments, it may be recorded with the lens 60 or other suitable optics adjusted to produce a converging or diverging object beam to the photosensitive material. Once recorded, the HOE (e.g., 30, 130) is developed and may be baked, as previously described.

[0050] The method also includes forming a diffuser (e.g., 102, 152) by mixing two or more immiscible or particulate materials (e.g., polymers) having different indices of refraction with one of the materials having physical properties sufficient for forming light scatterers within a matrix of the other materials. The diffuser may otherwise be provided as a commercially available diffuser, as discussed above. The HOE (e.g., 30, 130) is then suitably mounted to be generally parallel to the diffuser (e.g., 102, 152) for receiving the incoming light (e.g., 32, 132 shown in FIGS. 7 and 11). The mounting process may include lamination as a single element (e.g., with an index matching adhesive or material between the HOE and the diffuser), layering or coating, adjacent placement, or otherwise suitably applying the HOE and the diffuser together. The method contemplates the placement of the HOE (30, 130) and the corresponding diffuser (102, 152) in spaced apart relation with the air gap (not shown) therebetween or not.

[0051] In all the embodiments of the invention, as previously described, diffusive viewing screens or beaded screens are included in the screen apparatus. Both types of screens are generically referred to herein as diffusers. The beaded screens capture stray imaging light elements; have a limited acceptance angle, and the stray light is absorbed in a black matrix. The diffusive screen, on the other hand, scatters the stray light so that it may be somewhat homogeneous or uniform in intensity across the viewing screen. The type of diffusive screens include bulk diffusive screens. In other embodiments of the invention, surface diffusers, for example, ground glass and the like, could also be used instead of diffusive screens or beaded screens.

[0052] The screen apparatus embodiments of the invention should be designed so that the particular order, for example, the first order of the diffracted light would be the collimated light used for imaging. This would include approximately 95-96% (could be up to or greater than 99%, or much less) of the light diffracted by the holographic optical element into the first order, depending on the type of hologram and/or the cost of making the hologram. The other approximately 4-5% of the light is diffracted into other orders, including the zero order, although if the HOE 30 is

a volume hologram, there is (or substantially is) no other relevant order besides the zero order. It is contemplated that the HOE 30, 130 may instead be a reflection-type HOE rather than a transmissive-type HOE, which could be used to provide collimated light in reflection. In applications that require little or no chromatic dispersion, a reflection-type HOE may be desirable because, in certain embodiments, the reflection-type HOE may exhibit substantially little or no chromatic dispersion. The recording and formation of such a reflection-type HOE will be understood and appreciated by those skilled in the art. Once a master reflection-type HOE is made, it may be replicated using standard processes, such as embossing for surface kineform or surface relief HOEs, as can be provided by Polaroid or by using equipment purchased from DuPont. The screen apparatus embodiments should also be designed to prevent a hot spot from occurring on the screen, as discussed above. This could potentially lead to contrast problems otherwise, for example, screen corners darker than in the screen center, or having a peak of the imaging light intensity occur off-axis as viewed on the screen apparatus. Appropriate design of the HOE 30, 130 and the corresponding diffuser 42, 102, 152 in combination should assure more uniform illumination and avoid a hot spot, as the image light can be turned (e.g., collimated, converged or diverged) to avoid or substantially reduce oblique screen illumination.

[0053] The particular embodiments disclosed above are illustrative only, as the invention may be modified and practiced in different but equivalent manners apparent to those skilled in the art having the benefit of the teachings herein. For example, the HOEs described herein could instead be reflection-type HOEs, as discussed above, suitably designed to work in analogous fashion with diffusers, but in reflection-based screen apparatuses or displays. Moreover, image generation devices of the type (e.g., that include one or more cathode ray tubes or CRTs for forming an image) described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,557,343, issued to Yamagishi, entitled "Optical System Including A Reflecting Polarizer For A Rear Projection Picture Display Apparatus," incorporated by reference herein in its entirety, could be used as the image engine 14 and are intended to be included within the scope of the present invention. Other types of image generation devices known in the art could be used as the image engine 14 and are intended to be included within the scope of the present invention, as well. Furthermore, no limitations are intended to the details of construction or design shown herein, other than as described in the claims below. It is therefore evident that the particular embodiments disclosed above may be altered or modified and all such variations are considered within the scope and spirit of the invention. Accordingly, the protection sought herein is as set forth in the claims below.

What is claimed is:

1. A screen apparatus comprising:

- a holographic optical element adapted to receive image light and to redirect the image light; and
- a diffuser adapted to receive the redirected image light from the holographic optical element and to scatter the redirected image light.

2. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element and the diffuser are adapted to provide a substantially uniformly illuminated viewing region.

3. The screen apparatus of claim 2, wherein the viewing region comprises an optimized viewing position.

4. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element is adapted to substantially collimate the image light.

5. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element is adapted to substantially converge the image light.

6. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the diffuser comprises two or more immiscible materials.

7. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element and the diffuser are adjacent with substantially no air gap therebetween.

8. The screen apparatus of claim 1, further comprising index matching material between the holographic optical element and the diffuser.

9. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element and the diffuser are adapted to provide gain profiles of image light substantially directed toward a viewer.

10. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the diffuser focuses the redirected image light as it passes through the diffuser.

11. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element and the diffuser comprise an air gap therebetween.

12. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element and the diffuser are comprised in part of a computer monitor.

13. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the image light comprises substantially white light.

14. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element and the diffuser comprise a flexible combination.

15. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element and the diffuser comprise a laminated element.

16. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element comprises a transmission-type holographic optical element.

17. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element comprises a reflection-type holographic optical element.

18. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element comprises a photopolymer material.

19. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element records an interference pattern for redirecting the image light.

20. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element and the diffuser comprise a gap therebetween that is substantially minimized for reducing effects of chromatic dispersion.

21. The screen apparatus of claim 1, wherein the holographic optical element and the diffuser are adapted to provide the redirected image light predominantly to a particular viewing position.

\* \* \* \* \*